

million in the Democratic bipartisan plan and we're only covering 8.3 million in the Republican plan? Where's the money going? So we obviously want to have the lowest taxes possible, but we want to cover the most number of children. And I know that that's something that I know the president of our class has been very interested in.

I know that Mr. PERLMUTTER from Colorado has joined us in our freshman class, has taken a lead in, and I know your experiences in Colorado. Maybe you can share some of your thoughts on the SCHIP plan with our group here in the Chamber today.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I thank my friend from Florida. This is a place where the Democrats and Republicans have come together to look after kids from hardworking families across this country. This is not something that is just given out, and it doesn't make any fiscal sense or anything else. This is for people coming from hardworking families where the kids don't have insurance. And instead of going to the doctors, which is the most fiscally prudent way for a kid to be treated, they have to go to the emergency room, and at the emergency room, then, we, the taxpayers, pick up the bill. It's the most expensive form of medical care we could have. So it makes utter sense that we provide insurance to 10 million kids across this country from hardworking families so that they don't have to go to the emergency room, so they can go to their doctor, get proper treatment. But that just doesn't seem to be acceptable to the President of the United States.

Here we are wanting to bring change. We promised our constituents that we were going to change the way this Nation's being run, and one of those places is providing insurance in a prudent fashion for kids from hardworking families. But we have a President who wants the status quo, does not want to assist the hardworking people in the middle, and those are the folks that make up my district. It's not a rich district. It's not poor. Financially, it's right down the middle and people are struggling. And one of the first things to go when you're putting food on the table is insurance. And we want to make sure that 10 million kids have that insurance in this country. We passed it once; we passed it twice. This President says he's going to veto it again. He's about the status quo. He calls himself prudent fiscally, a fiscal conservative. Just the opposite, ladies and gentlemen, just the opposite.

So my friends, you know, we came here to change the direction of this Nation. We passed a stem cell bill which would have provided relief to millions of people across this country or hope for them who have debilitating diseases. We passed the SCHIP bill for 10 million kids.

But this President, he doesn't want change. He wants things as usual. He wants Washington to run as usual. We are going to keep knocking on his door

until we change the direction of this Nation. And I'm happy to be part of a class that is going to fight every day to do the right thing for our constituents and for the future of this Nation.

And with that, I'll yield back to my friends from Florida or Minnesota or New Hampshire, although he's not my friend, because I lost a bet on the Boston Red Sox game. But I would yield back to my friends.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. The Colorado Rockies were playing. That's right.

We're going to turn it back to the gentleman from Minnesota to get some thoughts on SCHIP and other things.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I appreciate it, and I appreciate the passion from my friend from Colorado. And he's exactly right. When we came to this Congress with a debt that was skyrocketed, no accountability, a President who said he was the decider and a Congress here that thought that their job was to just be an echo chamber for this President, much has changed. Unfortunately, the President doesn't realize that yet, and that's why we get a lot of gridlock that's happened.

But the gentleman brought up some very interesting points considering SCHIP and this idea of funding. I think that one of the issues that many of us agree on here is fiscal responsibility is an absolute priority because, unlike the previous Congresses, we understand that there will be a day of reckoning, and it will come for our children and our grandchildren. And it's putting this country in a position where I read an article here out of the Hong Kong Standard talking about where places around the world, when you would travel, and many of us have, where taxi drivers and store owners would take the U.S. dollars, they're no longer taking that. They're saying no because our currency is now seen as something that's not as stable, a nation that's in debt, a nation that's seen as a rogue nation to people. Those are the types of things that this administration did mainly because of what Mr. YARMUTH and the other members of this class have said, we did not exercise our right.

And as far as SCHIP goes, when we create a budget, and we want to balance this budget and we will, we understand it's far more than a fiscal document. It's also a reflection of this Nation's values and morals. And this issue of trying to cover our children, and I've heard my Republican colleagues say this is an attempt to expand coverage, to make it socialized or nationalized medicine.

Well, my colleagues have no real plan how to deal with this. They continue to pull this up. The bottom line here is the richest, most prosperous, greatest Nation this Earth has ever seen is leaving children uncovered. But it gets worse than that.

A Harvard study that recently came out shows one in eight of our veterans are not covered by health care insurance, those who have served this Na-

tion most honorably. This President has decided when he had fiscally irresponsible budgets, we couldn't balance the VA budget, the President simply made a great decision here. He cut off 400,000 veterans, sliced them off the bottom by saying they don't qualify. These could be combat veterans in my district making \$27,801. They are not injured in combat and they make too much money. Well, all of us know that's not going to buy you health insurance.

So this issue of SCHIP, this idea of trying to cover our veterans, what this President fails to realize is the values of the vast majority of people in this Nation that sent this class to Congress are not the ones he shares. And the talk of, we can't afford this, while telling our Judiciary Committee and our Oversight Committee that we can't ask questions about no-bid contracts and billions of dollars lost is unacceptable. And it is unacceptable because it stops in this Chamber. We are here to represent the districts of the people that sent us here, and we have an obligation by article I to fulfill those.

So this issue of SCHIP is not the smoke and mirrors you're hearing. It's, bottom line, covering our children. The issue of VA funding is simply, bottom line, X number of veterans, X number of costs this Nation should provide it. If you choose not to do that, then have the courage to tell the American people you are more interested in a tax cut to the top 1 percent than caring for children and veterans. But we won't hear that because this is about elections. This is about a vision of America that extends to next November.

This group gathered here tonight is about a vision of America that extends to the next generation, one that once again puts us in our rightful place.

So I couldn't be more proud. The gentleman from Florida has been a longtime advocate of caring for those in our society, the least fortunate, as well as making a fair society and growing opportunities. It's what we're all about. The old used-up cliches don't resonate with the public anymore. The old used-up cliches are nothing more than a way to try and hold on to a political ideology that is dead in this country, and it's time has passed. And we are once again here to reassert that.

So with that, I yield back to my esteemed colleague from Florida and look forward to the rest of our conversation.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Thank you very much, the gentleman from Minnesota.

We have a very, very special guest today, an honorary member of our freshman class, a senior Member of the Congress, the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, who'd like to join us and add something to our conversation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Well, my first act is to give my greatest appreciation for this caring and vested freshman class, front liners, front